

13.0 PUBLIC OPINION/INPUT

An essential step in the process of developing a Comprehensive Master Plan is public input. Typically this input is obtained through a variety of methods including public meetings, charettes, and various survey techniques. Often these exercises are conducted by planners who have little training in the solicitation of public input and the participants are obtained through volunteer outreach methods that reach only those who are often already engaged in municipal issues and conversations.

In order to avoid these tradition pitfalls and obtain public opinion data from a scientifically representative sampling of the Lowell population, the City of Lowell engaged the public opinion research firm Davidson Peterson Associates (DPA) to conduct extensive public opinion research in support of the Comprehensive Master Plan. Working under the direction of the City of Lowell planning staff, DPA is conducting a series of carefully designed exercises to obtain public input for the plan. This scope of work includes the following:

13.1 PHASE I: ASSEMBLY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING MATERIALS

DPA has reviewed all prior research recently conducted on the city and provided by the DPD. DPA has undertaken a background search of available public information and other public opinion research that may also be applicable to this project. DPA would also welcome any relevant research provided to us by the DPD. By reviewing prior research, the DPA team can design a survey instrument that garners new insights for the city. Three team members from Davidson-Peterson Associates spent several days each in Lowell conducting background interviews with key city personnel and community leaders (such as faith leaders, neighborhood associations, chamber of commerce members, business associations, education leaders, etc.).

Key findings include:

- Overwhelmingly, community leaders discussed a general feeling that Lowell has done well compared to other similar cities, and that the image of the city has improved considerably over the last ten years. Specifically, they discussed the city's progressive development, such as the arena, ballpark and new schools. This development has led to an increased sense of pride and optimism regarding the city.
- However, several community leaders relayed that the resident image of Lowell differs by neighborhood, ethnic group and socio-economic status. Specifically, those in more upscale neighborhoods have a more positive view of the city, while perceptions among those in more downscale areas remains more negative.
- Many community leaders discussed the ethnic vitality of the city. They feel that the immigrant populations and racial diversity in Lowell add positively to its image. However, several community leaders interviewed believe that a lack of representation of Lowell's minority peoples is the most important issue facing the city today. Several of those interviewed acknowledged an undercount of minority peoples in Lowell, and believe monolingualism to be a profound issue in the city.
- Several community leaders we spoke with are fairly impressed with the education system in Lowell. They feel that the universities located in Lowell do much to improve the community. Several also feel that Lowell's primary schools have made great strides and offer many benefits to students – such as diversity, breadth of classes, a strong sports program, and improved physical facilities. Conversely, issues in Lowell's primary schools were mentioned by other community leaders as a key dislike in the city.

- Despite strides made in improving Lowell's downtown over the last decade, many community leaders mentioned their dissatisfaction with the condition of the downtown area. While overall they are pleased with the improvements that have been made in recent years, they also wish for the momentum to continue and for the downtown area to be more fully developed. Specifically, they are looking for more retail businesses (shops, restaurants, etc.), for an increase in housing in the downtown area and for perhaps additional creative solutions (such as the artist's loft concept) to create interest in the downtown. Finally, they communicated a desire for more "energy" in the downtown area, evidenced by later shop hours and more "bustle" later into the evening.
- Many of those interviewed mentioned dislike for the "politics" evident in Lowell. They feel that those in power lack diversity and at times inhibit progress. Further, several interviewed believe that Lowell lacks the vision it once had. They feel that a defined strategic plan and direction is needed to continue Lowell's progress. Specifically, they wish that Lowell's leaders and residents would work together more cooperatively, inclusively and creatively.
- Housing was mentioned often as a factor of dislike in the city. However, the housing needs brought up differed – from needing more low-income housing, to improving the condition of existing housing, to renovating mill buildings to provide upscale riverfront housing.
- Many of those interviewed are dismayed by the traffic situation in Lowell. Specifically, they are frustrated by the traffic in the downtown area, and getting across town, given bridge bottlenecks. Related to the congested downtown area were complaints about parking availability and signage in the downtown area.
- Several leaders also expressed dismay for the condition of routes into and out of the city. They feel that they are confusing, poorly marked and lack some of the beautification/development that has occurred in much of the city. Hence, they believe that Lowell's gateways do not reflect the "new and improved" Lowell.
- Many community leaders communicated their dislike for Lowell's high density and wish for stronger zoning enforcement/laws to improve the conditions in "tighter" neighborhoods. They see a key way to improve the city overall is to concentrate at the neighborhood level, relieving some of the pressures associated with high density, such as parking, absentee landlords and overcrowded housing units.
- Community leaders are concerned that recent economic events will have a detrimental effect on the city's plans for continued economic development. Also, they expressed a desire for the city to be more assertive in obtaining additional funding (i.e., grants) and in helping the neighborhoods obtain grants. A minority of leaders mentioned the fiscal drain expected from correcting Lowell's combined sewer overflows.
- As a final question, many of the community leaders interviewed were asked to communicate their "vision" for what they think the City of Lowell will look like in twenty years. Almost without exception, they hold an optimistic outlook for the City. They believe that continued improvement will be seen here. However, these community leaders are somewhat varied in what their definition of improvement is. To some, Lowell will become more like Newburyport, with an increase in historic charm and tourist appeal. To others, Lowell will stay closer to its industrial roots and offer an improved lifestyle and economic stability to those who have traditionally lived here. In other words, there appears to be a disparity among community leaders as to whether Lowell will remain a more "blue-collar" community, or become more upscale in future years.

13.2 PHASE II: DATA COLLECTION

13.2.1 DESIGN SUPPORT FOCUS GROUPS

Two focus groups, including 14 total participants were conducted in December. Specifically, these groups were designed to identify issues affecting the citizens of Lowell, and discuss them in common language. Experienced focus group moderators from Davidson-Peterson Associates conducted the two groups. The results of these focus groups provided a qualitative assessment of the opinions of a representative sampling of Lowell residents and have been used to craft the survey instrument for the resident telephone survey.

Key findings include:

- Residents describe Lowell as a city with a lot to offer in terms of recreational opportunities – sporting events, museums, festivals. At the same time, some express frustration in that more is not offered in the downtown area (such as restaurants or late night activities).
 - Many residents mentioned Lowell’s sporting events at the Tsongas Arena and the LeLacheur Ballpark as positive aspects to living in the city. The sporting events are enjoyed by people of all ages and are described as inexpensive, nearby, and easy to get to.
 - Festivals and events were also mentioned as positive aspects of the city. Some say the festivals help build relationships in the community by bringing people of all ethnic backgrounds together. It was also mentioned that they add to the economic well-being of the city by making the city a better place to live.
 - Some residents expressed a sense of pride in the historical resources that the city offers. They also recognize that these resources have helped the city financially by attracting federal funds for improvements, such as the National Park designation of the textile mills.
- Most feel the cultural diversity in the city adds a richness to and builds tolerance among the residents. Some feel the different ethnic groups appreciate and sometimes even celebrate the differences among the population. However, there was a mention that different ethnic groups are not always treated fairly by city government.
- Overall, a sense of community and connection with neighbors in Lowell was expressed in the groups.
- Most feel that drug use is one of the biggest issues facing Lowell today. Residents feel that they are everywhere in the city. While some feel there has been some progress made in improving the drug situation, several feel that it is not enough. Most feel more police enforcement is needed.
- According to many of the residents, affordable housing is another major issue facing Lowell. Most feel the city could help to improve this situation by imposing and enforcing limits to what landlords charge for rent. Increasing the amount of housing in the city was also mentioned as a possible solution. Separately, some residents are concerned with the density of housing in Lowell.
- Although there is some disagreement regarding the quality of the primary school system in Lowell, many feel the educational opportunities in Lowell benefit the residents by attracting a wide variety of people to the city and offering more intellectual opportunities to the residents. Those who expressed concern for the schools feel the drop-out rate is too high, and the school is not doing enough to improve state standard test scores.
- Closed-mindedness is cited by some residents as an issue facing Lowell. This is an issue for both politicians and residents. A lack of representation of ethnic diversity in politics was mentioned as possibly contributing to this close-mindedness.

- Several residents feel that security is also an issue facing Lowell. They feel a heightened police presence as well as better lighting in some neighborhoods could improve this situation.

13.2.2 LOWELL RESIDENT TELEPHONE SURVEY

The universe for this study is all households in the city of Lowell. DPA will obtain at least 1,000 substantive responses from a randomly selected sample of Lowell households to the telephone study. Additional calls will be made as required to insure this level of response. Within those households, a respondent 18 years of age or older will be asked to participate. A sample of this size assures a statistically reliable sampling of residents in the city. Percentages at the 50%/50% split will be accurate at the 95% confidence limit within a tolerance of plus or minus 3.1%. The random sample may need to be supplemented with additional outreach to underrepresented minority populations.

The final questionnaire is included with this document. The survey is being conducted between February 11 and March 5, 2002. The telephone survey will be constructed to last a maximum of fifteen minutes. A longer questionnaire length would result in a significantly lower completion rate by residents.

Open ended responses will be limited but will allow residents to identify their most serious city issue and what they find most appealing about Lowell. To allow for sub-group analysis, key demographic data will be gathered as well as the neighborhood in which each respondent resides.

The following procedures will be used for implementing the telephone interviews:

- A sample of telephone households who are permanent residents of Lowell will be purchased. One adult member of each household will be randomly selected for interviewing. The sample will be selected to ensure that all qualified households have an equal opportunity to be included in the survey.
- Interviews will be conducted during late afternoon, evening and weekend hours to reach adults who work a variety of schedules, as well as those who are not currently employed outside of the home. Should the household be comprised of only Spanish or Portuguese-speaking adults, a telephone interviewer who is versed in that language will re-contact them and conduct the interview in their native tongue. Should the household speak Khmer, it will be re-contacted by a Cambodian interpreter located at Davidson-Peterson's offices. It is anticipated that up to 15% of the sample will require translation.
- Once a household has been selected, up to three callbacks will be attempted to complete an interview with that household before substituting another household in the sample.
- All calls will be made from a subcontracted central telephone facility to maintain complete control over the entire interviewing process and to ensure high quality results.
- The approved questionnaire will be converted to an online CATI instrument, allowing the telephone interviewers to collect data easily and accurately. Data collected will be transferred to Davidson-Peterson Associates electronically for tabulation and analysis.
- Prior to full fielding of the study, a pre-test will be completed with 25 residents, to assure that the survey instrument is indeed collecting information in the manner planned. These interviews will take place at the same hour of the day as is planned for the full field. DPA will make DPD aware of any issues and suggest any needed changes prior to full data collection.

Cross-tabulation reports of the data will be run, assuring that DPA can examine key sub-groupings, such as ethnicity, length of residence, neighborhood lived in, etc. and any priority segments identified by DPD.

13.2.3 BUSINESS OWNERS SURVEY

DPA will conduct a telephone interview of business owners in the Lowell area to address their feelings about the business climate and employment opportunities in the city. The universe for this study would be the owners of all businesses located in Lowell. A sample of 50 Lowell business owners would be selected to participate in this telephone study.

As fewer topics in this study will be addressed than in the resident survey, we anticipate this survey will last a maximum of ten minutes. The final questionnaire is included with this document. The survey is being conducted between February 11 and March 5, 2002.

This survey will be implemented using the same quality control procedures as in the resident telephone survey. However, versus using subcontracted telephone services, DPA anticipates using their own in-house Virtual Field™ telephone service to conduct these interviews.

13.3 PHASE III: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Following the completion of the resident and business owner surveys, DPA would perform a comprehensive analysis of all data collected in Phases I and II of this project. DPA will then compose a detailed report of findings, which will also be presented in person at DPD offices. This detailed report of findings would include the following:

- An Executive Summary;
- Summary of Major Findings;
- Conclusions;
- Recommendations for DPD next steps;
- Appendices containing methodology statements, the verbatim comments to any open-ended questions in the telephone survey, tabulated data, the focus group discussion guide and the telephone survey instrument.

13.4 PHASE IV: TESTING OF DRAFT PLAN STRATEGIES

Lowell's Division of Planning and Development seeks to author an appropriate and well-supported plan for the development and re-development of the City. To accomplish this goal, Lowell anticipates testing some draft plan strategies prior to implementation. For this phase, Davidson-Peterson Associates will conduct focus groups to achieve this objective. It is expected that these groups will be conducted at least three months following the conclusion of the Public Perception Study.

Four focus groups, limited to 8-10 participants each are recommended for this project. The groups will be held in the city of Lowell, at local facilities offering viewing arrangements. Davidson-Peterson will direct these groups in the same manner as those described in the Design Support Groups.

Those recruited for the groups will be dependent upon which issues/solutions are selected for evaluation. For example, if children's programs hold the highest priority in Lowell's strategic plan, DPA would recruit parents of school-aged children for the focus groups. For the purposes of costing this proposal, it is assumed that the groups will be conducted in English. (However, should an issue need to be explored which pertains solely to an ethnic population, DPA would propose to conduct additional focus groups using a moderator fluent in the required language. As the extent of these issues is not known at this time, a separate proposal will be needed to address issues which may pertain solely to a particular ethnic population.)

The structure of these focus groups would be the following:

- Warm-up introduction;
- Discussion of the current situation in Lowell for each of the strategies to be evaluated (for example, if we are exposing a new transportation idea, DPA would first discuss the status of transportation in Lowell);
- Exposure of the draft idea;
- Evaluation of the idea;
- Exploration of possible alternatives to the idea.

Deliverables will include a full report to be written and distributed to key DPD personnel. Davidson-Peterson Associates will also present key findings in person at DPD's offices, if desired. DPA's full report will be available to DPD within four weeks of the completion of the focus groups.

13.5 COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In addition to the public opinion research being conducted by DPA, the DPD is establishing a thirty-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to more closely scrutinize the master planning process and provide input and guidance to the staff planners. This CAC includes representative stakeholders from all elements of the Lowell community. Members are recruited through direct invitation and open solicitation of volunteers. The CAC will meet approximately every three months to review progress on the Master Plan and provide additional direction.

13.6 PUBLIC MEETINGS & FORUMS

It is also anticipated that a number of open public meetings and forums will be held to discuss individual plan strategies with target populations as well as the overall Master Plan with the community as a whole.

13.7 ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

As representatives of the community, both the Lowell City Council and the Lowell Planning Board will be actively engaged in the preparation of the Comprehensive Master Plan which will ultimately be adopted at public hearings before both bodies.

Lowell Telephone Survey

Hello, I'm _____, and am calling for the City of Lowell's Division of Planning and Development. Today, we're doing a survey on what it's like to live in Lowell and we'd like to include your views. The results of this survey will help the city of Lowell develop a Master Plan and influence policy decisions.

May I please speak with the male or female head of household?

[If transferred to another adult, repeat introduction. If continuing with the same individual who answered the telephone, continue with below.]

This survey will take about 15 minutes of your time. This is not a sales call and your individual opinions will remain strictly confidential.

IF NOT AVAILABLE OR NOT A GOOD TIME, ASK FOR A CONVENIENT TIME TO CALL BACK.

First _____ (Date/Time)
 Second _____ (Date/Time)
 Third _____ (Date/Time)

1. In what language would you prefer to conduct the interview?

- ☐ English
☐ Spanish [CONTINUE INTERVIEW IN SPANISH]
☐ Portuguese [CONTINUE INTERVIEW IN PORTUGUESE]
☐ Khmer [PHONECTICALLY WRITTEN IN KHMER: SOMEONE WILL CALL YOU BACK TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW; IS THERE A GOOD TIME FOR A CALLBACK _____ (Date/Time)]

2. Do you live in Lowell?

- ☐ No [THANK RESPONDENT AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW]
☐ Yes [CONTINUE]

3. Here's a list of items that some people may consider important when judging a community to live in. As I read each one, tell me how important that item is to you. Please use a scale of one to ten, where a '10' means *Very Important* and a '1' means *Not at all Important*.

	Not at all Important 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very Important 10
Police and Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roads, Transportation and Parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnic and Racial Equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
City Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreational Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stores and Businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of Living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Neighborhood Character	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Pride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Now, let's talk about how well the city of Lowell does addressing some specific issues. I am going to read a list of items and this time please tell me how well you feel Lowell is doing on each item. Rate Lowell on a scale of 1 to 10, where a '10' means **Lowell is doing an excellent job** and a '1' means **Lowell is doing a terrible job.** [ROTATE ITEMS]

Service	Terrible 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Excellent 10
Police and Safety										
A police presence in my neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A place where I feel safe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No noticeable drug activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roads and Transportation										
Well maintained roads and sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enough parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenient pathways for pedestrians and bicycles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic that moves freely through town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Streets and walkways designed to keep accidents from happening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good public transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnic and Racial Equality										
English classes offered at convenient times and places	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everyone is treated fairly by city officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
City Services										
Residents are well informed about city services and activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good snow removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good trash removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good recycling program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing										
Not feeling crowded in my neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Residential housing is well maintained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good selection of housing that I can afford	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreational Opportunities										
Parks and recreational areas that meet my needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plenty of cultural activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plenty of public events and festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lots of positive activities for children and teens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Downtown restaurants and cafes open later in the evening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job Opportunities										
Lots of job opportunities for me in the city	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools										
Good public schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stores and Businesses										
A good variety of stores downtown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stores in my neighborhood that meet my basic shopping needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of Living										
Reasonable property taxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Neighborhood Character										
A clean and attractive city	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
A city that preserves its historic places	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Environmental Quality										
Good quality drinking water	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Community Pride										
Neighbors that get along well	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

5. Using a ten-point scale where ‘10’ means **Truly wonderful place to live** and ‘1’ means **Absolutely awful place to live**, please tell me, overall, how you would rate Lowell as a place to live.

	Absolutely awful place to live 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Truly wonderful place to live 10
Overall evaluation of Lowell as a place to live	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

A city often needs to choose how it spends its resources on issues for its citizens. We would like to know how you think Lowell should choose between some issues. **[Read first pair and then ask – Which do you think Lowell should focus on?]**

- 6.
- () Making the city look better, but charging higher taxes to do so
 - OR
 - () Keeping the look of Lowell the way it is, without charging higher taxes.
- 7.
- () Making it easier to drive through the city, by widening roads and removing stop signs
 - OR
 - () Slowing speeds on residential streets to protect pedestrians and quiet neighborhoods.
- 8.
- () Making housing more affordable by building more, but at the cost of more people living in each neighborhood
 - OR
 - () Create more space in neighborhoods by removing old apartment buildings, but causing housing costs to increase.
- 9.
- () Make Lowell’s public areas look more attractive by improving the downtown and city gateways
 - OR
 - () Have your home located in a more attractive area by improving the residential neighborhoods.
- 10.
- () More equipment for children’s play in parks such as swing sets
 - OR
 - () More athletic fields in parks such as basketball and volleyball courts

- OR
- () More open space for conservation or passive parks.
- 11.
- () Regulate construction to protect historic design or neighborhood character
OR
- () Promote construction through relaxed building restrictions and easier permitting.
- 12.
- () Encourage job creation by bringing industrial and commercial development to more areas of the city
OR
- () Protect residential areas by restricting industrial and commercial development nearby.
- 13.
- () Promote Lowell as a desirable place to live in the Greater Boston area
OR
- () Promote Lowell as its own unique city, apart from Boston.
- 14.
- () Protect neighborhood quality of life by enforcing housing codes
OR
- () Protect private property rights by allowing an individual property owner to do what they want with their property.
15. Now I am going to read statements others have made about living in Lowell. For each statement please tell me whether you **Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly.**

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
The future of Lowell rests with bringing upscale stores and services to town.	()	()	()	()
Lowell should continue to welcome immigrants to the community.	()	()	()	()
Lowell should remain a blue-collar town.	()	()	()	()
Promoting Lowell as a tourist destination benefits the residents greatly.	()	()	()	()

16. If Lowell could do one thing to improve the community as a place for you to live, what do you think it should do?

[TEXT BOX]

The following questions are for classification purposes only.

17. In what year did you move to Lowell?

() [TEXT BOX] OR () I've lived here all my life

18. Which Lowell neighborhood do you live in? **[DO NOT READ LIST, SELECT ONE. If respondent does not know which neighborhood, get their street address or the names of the 2 streets that intersect closest to their home.]**

Neighborhood	
The Acre	()
Back Central	()
Belvidere	()
Centralville	()
Christian Hill	()
The Highlands	()
Lower Belvidere	()
Lower Highlands	()
Middlesex Village	()
Pawtucketville	()
Riverside	()
Sacred Heart	()
South Lowell	()
Swede Village	()
Don't know	()
Other (Please specify) [TEXT BOX]	
OR: Street address [TEXT BOX]	()

19. What type of home do you live in? **[READ LIST]**

- () Single Family Home
 () Apartment -----→ Ask “How many units are in your building?” [TEXT BOX]
 () Duplex
 () Townhouse -----→ Ask “How many units are in your building?” [TEXT BOX]
 () Other -----→ Ask “How many units are in your building?” [TEXT BOX]

20. Do you own or rent your home?

- () Own
 () Rent

21. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

[TEXT BOX] – if “1” Go to Q23

22. How many children under the age of 18 currently live in your household?

[TEXT BOX]

or

- () None – Go to Q23

23. Are any of those children enrolled in Lowell public schools?

- () Yes
 () No

24. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic background? **[READ LIST]**

- ☐ Black, African American
- ☐ Brazilian
- ☐ Portuguese
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino
- ☐ Cambodian
- ☐ White or Caucasian
- ☐ Laotian
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) [Text Box]

25. What is your age? _____

26. What is the occupation of the chief wage earner or head of your household?

- ☐ Retired (**Please check previous occupation and Go to Q27**)
- ☐ Professional/technical
- ☐ Managerial/proprietor
- ☐ Clerical/sales
- ☐ Skilled craftsperson
- ☐ Factory worker
- ☐ Service worker
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed -- **Go to Q27**
- ☐ Student – **Go to Q27**
- ☐ Homemaker – **Go to Q27**
- ☐ Other _____ (**Please specify**)

27. What is the last year of formal schooling you personally completed? **[READ LIST]**

- ☐ Some High School or Less
- ☐ High School Graduate
- ☐ Vocational/Technical School (2 year)
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ College Graduate (4 year)
- ☐ Some Post Graduate work
- ☐ Post Graduate Degree

28. Please stop me when I read the category that includes your total annual household income for 2001. **[READ LIST]**

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 or more

29. Gender **[INTERVIEWER RECORD]**

☐ Male

☐ Female

Thank you for your time. Your opinions are greatly appreciated.

Lowell Business Owner Survey

Hello, I'm _____, and am calling for Lowell's Division of Planning and Development. Today, we're doing a survey on what it's like to run a business in Lowell and we'd like to include your views. The results of this survey will help the city of Lowell develop a Master Plan and influence policy decisions.

Is the owner or manager, or someone who is responsible for corporate communications at your company available?

[If transferred to another person, repeat introduction. If continuing with the same person who answered the telephone, continue below.]

This survey will take about 10 minutes of your time. This is not a sales call and your individual opinions will remain strictly confidential.

[If not available or not a good time, ask for a convenient time to call back.]

First _____ (Date/Time)
 Second _____ (Date/Time)
 Third _____ (Date/Time)

30. First, let me read you several different factors that may affect the business climate in Lowell. As I read each one, please tell me whether or not you think each factor would encourage or discourage business owners from operating their business in the City of Lowell. Use a ten-point scale where "1" means **Strongly discourages businesses to operate in Lowell** and "10" means **Strongly encourages businesses to operate in Lowell**. You can use a "1," "10," or any number in between to indicate how important an item is to you. **[Rotate items]**

	Strongly Discourages	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Strongly Encourages
Commercial tax rates	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Available office or work space	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Parking availability	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Level of crime	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Zoning ordinances	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Availability of appropriately skilled employees	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Support from city government	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
City politics	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
The market for goods or services	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Competition in the area	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Residential cost of living	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Affordable office or work space	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Traffic congestion	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Layout and conditions of roads in Lowell	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Public transportation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Level of community pride	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Quality of residential life	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

Ability to get permits	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Tax incentives	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
Grants for building improvements or signage	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

31. Now I am going to read statements others have made about Lowell. For each statement please tell me whether you **Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly.**

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree Strongly
The future of Lowell rests with bringing upscale stores and services to town.	()	()	()	()
Lowell should continue to welcome immigrants to the community.	()	()	()	()
Lowell should remain a blue-collar town.	()	()	()	()
The unique character of Lowell's downtown is important to maintain.	()	()	()	()
Promoting Lowell as "a great place to visit" benefits the city greatly.	()	()	()	()
Compared with other cities and towns in the area, Lowell's regulations and permitting processes make it easy to do business in this city.	()	()	()	()

32. A city often needs to choose how it spends its resources on issues. We would like to know how you think Lowell should choose between some issues.

For each pair of issues that I read to you, think about how important each is for the city of Lowell. You have ten points to allocate between the two issues. You can allocate any number to either one provided the total equals ten points. Give more points to the issue that you think is more important for Lowell to focus on. **[Read first pair and then ask – How would you like to allocate your ten points?]**

- _____ Encourage business development by permitting commercial and industrial uses in more areas
OR
_____ Promote a stable local workforce by protecting attractive residential neighborhoods
10 points
- _____ Attract business and investment through protection of Lowell's unique character
OR
_____ Promote construction through relaxed building restrictions and easier permitting
10 points
- _____ Promote more business development in the downtown area
OR
_____ Promote more business development in the neighborhood business districts
10 points

33. What are some of the reasons you choose to operate your business in the City of Lowell?

[TEXT BOX]

34. What are some of the barriers to owning or opening a business in Lowell?

[TEXT BOX]

35. If you had only one choice, how could the city most help you operate your business in Lowell?

[TEXT BOX]

Business Details

36. How many people does this business employ in Lowell?

[TEXT BOX]

37. In what category would you classify your business? By “type of business” we mean broad categories such as: a restaurant, an accounting firm, a doctor’s office, etc.

[TEXT BOX]

38. What is your title? **[Interviewer: Listen and check most appropriate title]**

- ☐ CEO/COO/Chairman/President
- ☐ Owner/Partner/Principal
- ☐ CFO/Controller/Treasurer
- ☐ Vice President/Director
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Professional (Consultant, Legal, Medical, Architect, etc.)
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Teacher or Professor
- ☐ Technical Staff (programmer, engineer, maintenance, lineman)
- ☐ Service Staff (policeman, social worker, trucker, hair stylist)
- ☐ General Staff
- ☐ Clerical
- ☐ Other

39. How long has this business been located in Lowell?

[TEXT BOX]

40. What area of Lowell are you located in? **[DO NOT READ LIST, SELECT ONE. If respondent does not know the area they are located in, get their street address or the names of the 2 streets that intersect closest to their business.]**

Neighborhood	
The Acre	<input type="radio"/>
Back Central	<input type="radio"/>
Belvidere	<input type="radio"/>
Centralville	<input type="radio"/>
Christian Hill	<input type="radio"/>
Downtown	<input type="radio"/>
The Highlands	<input type="radio"/>
Lower Belvidere	<input type="radio"/>
Lower Highlands	<input type="radio"/>
Middlesex Village	<input type="radio"/>
Pawtucketville	<input type="radio"/>
Riverside	<input type="radio"/>
Sacred Heart	<input type="radio"/>
South Lowell	<input type="radio"/>
Swede Village	<input type="radio"/>
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify) [TEXT BOX]	
OR: Street address [TEXT BOX]	<input type="radio"/>

41. Which of the following statements best describe your living situation?

- ☐ I currently live in Lowell - **Go to Q13**
☐ I do not currently live in Lowell but I did at one time - **Go to Q13**
☐ I never lived in Lowell - **Thank you very much for your time.**

42. Would you consider yourself to be someone who grew up in Lowell?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Thank you very much for your time. Your opinions are greatly appreciated.